Bisphenol A – Frequently Asked Questions
April 2013

The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment has added Bisphenol A (BPA) to the Proposition 65 list of chemicals known to the state to cause reproductive toxicity.

1. What is Bisphenol A?

BPA is an industrial chemical produced in large quantities to make polycarbonate plastics, epoxy resins, thermal paper and adhesives.
BPA is found in:

- The coatings inside some food and drink cans.
- Some hard plastic food and drink containers, which might be labeled with a number “7” or “PC” on the bottom.
- Some older plastic baby bottles and sippy cups. Use of BPA in these products officially ended in the U.S. in July 2012.
- Some plastic stretch wrap used to cover or package food.
- Some receipts such as from cash registers or gas pumps.

BPA has been frequently detected in samples of human blood, breast milk, and other tissues and cells.

2. Why Is there concern about Bisphenol A?

BPA can interact with a number of systems in the body including those regulated by the female hormone, estrogen, and by thyroid hormones. BPA may cause problems in the developing fetus, and impact the developing brain and subsequent behavior. BPA exposure during pregnancy may also affect development of the breast and reproductive organs.

3. Why did California add Bisphenol A to the Proposition 65 list?

California added BPA to the list of chemicals known to the State to cause reproductive toxicity based on a report by the National Toxicology Program’s Center for the Evaluation of Risks to Human Reproduction. The report found that “high” levels of exposure to BPA caused developmental harm in laboratory animals. The report cited studies of laboratory animals in which exposure to BPA affected their litter size, infant body weight, live birth rate and onset of puberty.

4. What is Proposition 65?

Proposition 65 is a “right to know” law that was approved by voters in 1986. It requires California to maintain a list of chemicals that cause cancer or reproductive toxicity. Rather than banning or regulating chemicals in consumer products, Proposition 65

requires warnings that consumers may use to inform their decisions on whether or not to purchase or use products that expose them to chemicals on the list. The warning requirement takes effect one year after a chemical is added to the list.
Learn more about Proposition 65 at:
http://www.oehha.ca.gov/prop65/background/index.html

5. What other action is being proposed?

To help businesses determine whether their products expose consumers to BPA at levels that require a Proposition 65 warning, the Office has proposed a safe harbor level for the chemical. Exposures below the safe harbor level will not require warnings. Because the Proposition 65 listing is based on a National Toxicology Program finding that BPA affected the development of laboratory animals only at "high" levels of exposure, the proposed safe harbor level is above the level most people would encounter in products. More information on the proposed safe harbor level (officially known as a Maximum Allowable Dose Level) is available at OEHHA's web site at: http://www.oehha.org/prop65/law/012513BPA_MADL.html .

6. What other actions have governmental organizations taken?

- California has enacted the Toxin-Free Infants and Toddlers Act. Beginning on July 1, 2013 the manufacture, sale or distribution of any bottle or cup designed for consumption of food or beverages by children age 3 or younger that contains detectable levels of BPA is prohibited.
- Actions taken by other states, including Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin, can be found at http://www.ncsl.org/issues-research/env-res/policy-update-on-state-restrictions-on-bisphenol-a.aspx.
- The European Commission has prohibited the use of BPA for the manufacture of polycarbonate infant feeding bottles.
- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration no longer permits the use of BPA in baby bottles and sippy cups.
- The French National Assembly passed a bill that bans the sales of any food packaging container and food material containing BPA by January 1, 2014.

7. What are Possible Ways to Reduce Bisphenol A Exposure?

- Eat more fresh food and less canned food.
- Use glass or stainless-steel containers to store food and liquids.
- Avoid using plastic containers for hot food or drinks. Avoid microwaving plastic containers.
- Breastfeed your infant if you can. For bottle-feeding, use glass bottles.
- Wash your hands and your children's hands before eating or drinking. BPA can get on your hands from some items you touch, like receipts.